

**In the Claim:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) An extendible serving utensil for serving food from ~~at~~ a salad bar ~~or the like~~, said extendible serving utensil comprising:

a) a retractable tether housing ~~means~~ member for rotatably retracting a tether into said retractable tether housing member;

b) means for coupling said retractable tether housing member ~~means~~ to an external mounting means for elevating said retractable tether housing ~~means~~ member above food served on a ~~relative to said~~ salad bar;

c) a tether member ~~means~~ connected to said retractable tether housing member, ~~means~~ at one end thereof, for retraction of said tether member ~~means~~ into said retractable tether housing member, ~~means~~ said tether member ~~means~~ having a free end; and

d) a serving utensil coupled to said free end of said tether member ~~means~~.

2. (Original) An extendible serving utensil as in Claim 1 and in which said serving utensil is a spoon.

3. (Original) An extendible serving utensil as in Claim 2 and in which said spoon is a serving spoon.

4. (Amended) An extendible serving utensil as in Claim 1 and in which said serving utensil is a pair of tongs for serving food.

5.(Original) An extendible serving utensil as in Claim 1 and in which said external mounting means is a sneeze shield over said salad bar.

6.(Amended) An extendible serving utensil as in Claim 5 and further including a fixed coupling means for coupling said retractable tether housing member ~~means~~ to said sneeze shield.

7.(Amended) An extendible serving utensil ~~as in Claim 5 and in which~~ for serving food at a salad bar, said extendible serving utensil comprising:

a) a retractable tether housing member;  
b) ~~said~~ a fixed coupling means ~~is~~ defined by an eye ~~means~~ with a shaft ~~means~~ extending therefrom, and said shaft ~~means~~ being passed through a hole in ~~said~~ a sneeze shield extending over a salad bar ~~and secured~~ for coupling said fixed coupling means to said sneeze shield, said retractable tether housing member coupled to said eye for elevating said retractable tether housing member above said salad bar;

c) a tether member connected to said retractable tether housing member at one end thereof for retracting said tether member into said retractable tether housing member, said tether member having a free end; and

d) a serving utensil coupled to said free end of said tether member.

8.(Amended) An extendible serving utensil as in Claim 5 and further including a temporary

coupling means for coupling said retractable tether housing member ~~means~~ to said sneeze shield.

9. (Amended) An extendible serving utensil as in Claim 8 and in which said temporary coupling means is defined by a suction cup coupling member ~~means~~ having a suction cup of said suction cup member connected temporarily between said sneeze shield and said retractable tether housing member ~~means~~ .

10. (Amended) An extendible serving utensil ~~as in claim 1 and in which~~ for serving food at a salad bar, said extendible serving utensil comprising:

a) a retractable tether housing member;  
b) a means for coupling said retractable tether housing member to an external mounting means for elevating said retractable tether housing member above food served at a salad bar, said external mounting means defined by ~~is~~ a base plate with a shaft extending at normal therefrom and said shaft includes a connector ~~means~~ at a distal end of said shaft and said retractable tether housing member ~~means~~ is coupled to said connector ~~means~~ at said distal end;

c) a tether member connected to said retractable tether housing member at one end thereof, for retraction of said tether member into said retractable tether housing member, said tether member having a free end; and

d) a serving utensil coupled to said free end of said tether member.

11.(Amended) An extendible serving utensil as in Claim 10 ~~X~~ and in which said shaft is a two piece element with a male connector and a female connector.

12. (Amended) An extendible serving utensil ~~as in claim 1 and in which~~ for serving food at a salad bar, said extendible serving utensil comprising:

- a) a retractable tether housing member;
- b) a means for coupling said retractable tether housing member to an external mounting means for elevating said retractable tether housing member above food served at a salad bar, said external mounting means is defined by a shaft having a connector ~~means~~ at ~~one~~ a distal end and a clamp connector at another end, said clamp connector for securing said shaft on an edge of a pan and said retractable housing member is coupled to said connector at said distal end;
- c) a tether member connected to said retractable tether housing member at one end thereof, for retraction of said tether member into said retractable tether housing member, said tether member having a free end; and
- d) a serving utensil coupled to said free end of said tether member.

13.(Original) An extendible serving utensil as in Claim 12 and in which said shaft is a two piece element having a male fitting and a female fitting.

14.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar or the like for serving food in spaced containers and

having a sneeze shield extending over said spaced containers but spaced from said spaced containers, said salad bar including serving utensils for self service of food served in said spaced containers, said improvement comprising:

a) a retractable tether device having a tether means with a first end coupled to said retractable tether device and having a free end;

b) a serving utensil coupled to said free end of said tether means; and

c) said retractable tether secured to said sneeze shield.

15.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar as in Claim 14 wherein said serving utensil is a serving spoon.

16.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar as in Claim 14 wherein said serving utensil is a pair of tongs.

17.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar as in Claim 14 wherein said retractable tether device is secured to an under surface of said sneeze shield by a suction cup means.

18.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar as in Claim 14 wherein said retractable device is secured to an under side of said sneeze shield by a fixed connector means.

19.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar or the like for serving food in spaced containers, said salad bar including serving utensils for self service of food served in said spaced containers,

said improvement comprising:

a) a retractable tether device with a tether means connected to said retractable tether device at one end and said tether means having a free end coupled to a serving utensil;

b) a shaft means secured, at one end, to a container of said spaced containers and having a distal end extending above said container; and

c) said retractable tether device connected to said distal end of said shaft means.

20.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar as in Claim 19 where said shaft means includes a base plate means at said one end for securing said shaft means vertically in said container.

21.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar as in Claim 19 wherein said shaft means includes a clamp means at said one end for securing said shaft to said container.

22.(Cancel) A retractable serving utensil system for partaking food from containers at a salad bar or the like, said retractable serving utensil system comprising:

a) a retractable tether means having an extendible, retractable tether, said tether having a first end and a free end;

b) means for elevating said retractable tether means above a container supported on a salad bar or the like; and

c) a serving utensil means and means for coupling said serving utensil means to said free end of said extendible, retractable tether.

23.(Cancel) A retractable serving utensil system as in Claim 22 wherein said means for elevating includes a sneeze shield over said salad bar or the like and a means for coupling said retractable tether means to said sneeze shield.

24.(Cancel) A retractable serving utensil system as in Claim 23 wherein said means for coupling said retractable tether means to said sneeze shield is a suction cup coupled to said retractable tether means and connected by suction to an underside of said sneeze shield.

25.(Amended) A retractable serving utensil system ~~as in Claim 22~~ for partaking food from containers on a salad bar; said retractable serving utensil system comprising;

a) a retractable tether member having an extendible, retractable tether, said tether having a first end and a free end;

b) a salad bar for supporting a container thereon and a sneeze shield over said salad bar and means for coupling said retractable tether member above said container on said salad bar wherein said means for coupling said retractable tether ~~means~~ member to said sneeze shield is an eye hook with a threaded shaft and said threaded shaft extends through a hole in said sneeze shield and is held in place by a threaded nut ~~means~~ ;  
and

c) a serving utensil member and a means for coupling said serving utensil member to said free end of said extendible, retractable tether.

26.(Amended) A retractable serving utensil

system ~~As in Claim 22 and~~ for partaking food from containers on a salad bar, said retractable serving utensil system comprising:

a) a retractable tether member having an extendible, retractable tether, said tether having a first end and a free end;

b) a means for elevating said retractable tether member above a container supported on a salad bar wherein said means for elevating includes a shaft having a first end and a distal end and said first end of said shaft includes a means for securing said shaft to said container supported on said salad bar ~~or the like~~ and said distal end includes a means for securing said retractable tether ~~means~~ member to said shaft  
/ ; and

c) a serving utensil and a means for coupling said serving utensil to said free end of said extendible, retractable tether.

27. (Amended) A retractable serving utensil system ~~As in Claim 22 and~~ for partaking food from containers on a salad bar, said retractable serving utensil system comprising:

a) a retractable tether member having an extendible, retractable tether, said tether having a first end and a free end;

b) a means for elevating said retractable tether member above a container supported on a salad bar wherein said means for elevating includes a shaft having a first end and a distal end and said first end of said shaft includes a means for securing said shaft to said container supported on said salad bar ~~or the like~~ and said distal end includes a housing for receiving



and securing said retractable tether ~~means~~  
member to said shaft / ; and

c) a serving utensil and a means for  
coupling said serving utensil to said free end of  
said extendible, retractable tether.

28.(Original) A retractable serving utensil system as in Claim 27 and in which said housing for receiving and securing said retractable tether means includes a hole for permitting said extendible, retractable tether to extend out of said housing and said housing further includes a cover means for securing said retractable tether means in said housing.

29.(Amended) A retractable serving utensil system as in Claim 25 ~~24~~ wherein said serving utensil member is a spoon.

30.(Amended) A retractable serving utensil system as in Claim 25 ~~24~~ wherein said serving utensil member is a pair of tongs for serving food.

31.(Original) A retractable serving utensil system as in Claim 26 wherein said serving utensil is a spoon

32.(Amended) A retractable serving utensil system as in Claim 26 wherein said serving utensil is a pair of tongs for serving food.

33.(Original) A retractable serving utensil system as in Claim 27 wherein said serving utensil is a spoon.

34.(Amended) A retractable serving utensil system as in Claim 27 wherein said serving utensil is a pair of tongs for serving food.